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Echoes from the Past: Intergenerational Memories in Cyprus

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The purpose of this article is to describe young people's awareness of their parents' and grandparents' stories of the events of 1974 in Cyprus and to evaluate the extent to which they perceive teachers as other key figures in their lives endorsing family accounts of history. The article is based on focus group discussions with 20 Turkish Cypriot and 20 Greek Cypriot teenagers from two schools in Cyprus. The article describes how in some cases, young people appropriate these memories as their own, while in other cases, they acknowledge how the passing of time dilutes the significance of past events and allows some young people to envisage a different collective future. © 2012 The Author(s). Children & Society © 2012 National Children's Bureau and Blackwell Publishing Limited.

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Introduction

Young people often learn about the past from the stories recounted by older generations. In telling and retelling stories, adults can keep the past alive and encourage young people to situate the present in the past. Stories allow young people to develop a sense of continuity over time and help create and sustain notions of identity, belonging and connectedness. While stories may begin as autobiographical memories, through the sharing of these stories, memories are created and recreated. These memories allow young people in particular to share in the stories of older members of society and through time to incorporate these stories into their own life narratives. Stories may also be employed to achieve social, economic or political ends. Where people have experienced collective emotionally traumatic events, stories facilitate the establishment and maintenance of shared memories of the past and more importantly help contribute to shared interpretations of these events. Hence, stories enable 'facts' to be constructed and reconstructed. Through stories, children can become familiar with, not just their family memories and family histories, but the history of the nation. Through the inter-generational sharing of memories, young people come to experience the significance of past historical events as guided to do so by older members of society. While not all memories are talked about, Pennebaker and Banasik (1997) argue that collective traumatic events, particularly those brought about by political processes experienced in the past, are likely to be continually relived in the present. Through these collective memories, young people come to develop a sense of self in relation to others and to the nation. According to Wertsch (2002, p. 32), collective memory is fundamental to the creation of individual and group identities and, in producing a useable past to achieve present day objectives, 'the notion of accuracy must be downplayed or sacrificed'.

Research from areas of protracted conflict, such as Northern Ireland, indicates that parents and relatives have a significant impact on young people's understanding of the past. However, so too has the educational system (Bell and others, 2010). According to Roediger and Wertsch (2008), many of the almost unconscious attitudes young people have towards the past of their country emanate from teachers and the educational process, and this often involves using a narrative that remembers some features of history and forgets others. History education is often seen as objective, neutral knowledge, while family memories are often regarded as subjective and biased; hence, often, history education is concerned with unpacking personal accounts. At the same time, in contested societies where the past is open to varying interpretation, different sides are highly selective in the events they remember to explain the past and justify the present.

Of course, young people do not passively internalise adult memories. According to Fivush (2008), there are two core developmental periods for the transmission of memory from adults to children. The first is during the pre-school years, when children do indeed play a rather passive role in memory reproduction by mainly repeating or confirming what parents and other older members of society say. However, during adolescence, young people begin to add their own interpretation to the older generation's reminiscences. Young people start to actively contribute to the retelling of the stories of their families' histories and in the process, memory moves from simple recall of a past event to interpretation of a past event. Hence, young people become co-story tellers of family memories. The very act of sharing shapes the current and future status of the memory being produced and offers the possibility for memory to be challenged and resisted. For example, Shils (1981) argues that younger generations often define themselves in opposition to their elders and this renders problematic each new generation's relationship with the previous generation's memories of the past. In discussing autobiographical memory, Halbwachs (1992) points out that these kinds of memories are based on experiences that individuals have been directly exposed to and therefore they cannot effortlessly jump from generation to generation or, as Mannheim (1952, p. 296) succinctly points out, only memory 'personally gained in real situations sticks'. This renders problematic the inter-generational transmission of memory and allows a voice for the listener to accept, contest and change the memory on offer. Indeed, Wertsch (2002) argues that too much attention is paid to the 'first voice' in memory recall, that is the person to whom the memory belongs, and too little attention is paid to the 'second voice', the listener who hears this memory and eventually retells the memory in the 'second voice'. This paper focuses on young people as examples of the 'second voice' in memory recall. Drawing on the 'new sociology of childhood' (Prout and James, 1997), which locates children as active agents rather than passive recipients of socialisation, the paper focuses on how memory is constructed, confirmed, negotiated and contested by young people rather than passively transmitted from adults to children. Hence, memory is never statically reproduced, but is always open to transformation and resistance.

Methodology

The paper is based on focus group discussions with 20 Greek Cypriot and 20 Turkish Cypriot young people aged between 14 and 16 from two schools located in Nicosia, the divided capital of Cyprus and the research was carried out during 2008–2009. The schools are located about four miles apart from each other, but separated by the Green Line which cuts Nicosia in half, although crossings are possible since 2003. All of the young people were fluent English speakers, although their first language was either Greek or Turkish and they attended private schools where most of the curriculum was taught in English. While this introduces a

class bias into the research design, I justified this on the basis of avoiding the pitfalls of working through Greek-speaking and Turkish-speaking interpreters and in the process losing some of the richness of the data generated. Temple (2002), for example, argues that using interpreters/translators in research creates a number of methodological problems around using other individuals to 'voice' or transmit the words and meanings of research participants, and suggests that core differences are likely to exist between the translation and the oral account. While, as is usual in school-based research, permission was initially acquired via school principals and teachers, I made it clear to young people at the beginning of the research that their own consent was crucial. Moreover, in each school, young people were asked to volunteer to take part in the research prior to parental consent forms being sent out. In each school, a private room was allocated for the research to take place and no teachers were present during the discussions.

Each focus group comprised five young people and overall eight focus group discussions took place, four in the Greek Cypriot school and four in the Turkish Cypriot school. At the beginning of the focus group discussions, I distributed a map of divided Cyprus and asked young people to locate where their parents and grandparents came from before the division of 1974. The majority of both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot young people indicated that either their parents or grandparents had been directly influenced by the events of 1974 and had been 'forced' to move because of these events. Hence, relocation was a majority experience for the families of both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot young people. In discussing movement from the north to the south or *vice versa*, some young people recounted the trauma experienced by their families and how stories regarding these events had been passed from one generation to another. Volkan (2008, p. 1) suggests that 'massive traumas at the hands of "enemies" affect both individuals and societies for decades. It was clear that some young people had appropriated their elders' memories and hence some spoke with passion and emotion regarding the events of 1974. Some young people had lost family members because of the invasion, while others recounted the uncertainty with which their families had to cope regarding the fate of family members who were still among the missing. These memories did not come up in all focus groups because I did not press young people to recount these experiences. Indeed, focus groups may be an inappropriate method for the recalling of personal family memories. However, Hopkins (2007) argues that within focus groups where participants know each other in advance, they may be more willing to discuss personal issues and that the method is useful for illuminating collective memories and experiences. During focus group discussions, I subsequently asked young people to reflect on the extent to which the educational system endorses (or not) their families' memories of core past events. Here, I was not concerned with an explicit examination of the teaching of history in Cyprus, but with young people's perceptions of the extent to which teachers, as other key authority figures in young people's lives, endorse family accounts of history. The remainder of the article focuses on how these memories were accepted, endorsed, challenged, resisted and transformed by young people as they struggled to make sense of competing and conflicting memories of the past.

Remembering and forgetting in family narratives

The importance of family to young people emerged early on in focus group discussions. When reflecting on the good aspects of growing up in Cyprus, the majority of young people produced discourses around perceptions of Cyprus as a small island with strong family ties and respect for elders. Many young people spoke of how families crossing at least two generations

met up and socialised at weekends, particularly around meal times, whereby lunch would stretch across many hours. While, of course, families are often sites of power, control and conflict, as Brannen and others (2000) remind us, they also include relationships of love, caring and support. These relationships impact how the young hear and internalise stories from older family members. Young people spoke of how parents and grandparents recounted stories, often during meal times, of a romanticised past whereby Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots lived in harmony together. Both groups drew on different historical periods to describe this era reflecting some element of internalisation of dominant political discourses on both sides, which present competing versions of Cypriot history (Christou, 2007). For Turkish Cypriots, the period before the Republic of Cyprus was formed in 1960 represented the golden age of Turkish-Cypriot and Greek Cypriot relations as the following quotes indicate:

My mum's dad said that before the Republic of Cyprus was formed there wasn't such a thing as Greek Cypriots or Turkish Cypriots, there was Cypriots. I mean they didn't think differently from each other and they lived in peace.

(Turkish Cypriot boy)

Once it was a united country. It was all a united country. It was just one Cyprus and everyone got along especially before the Republic of Cyprus came about.

(Turkish Cypriot girl)

Greek Cypriot young people also produced images of a peaceful past but blamed Turkey's invasion in 1974 for disrupting these harmonious relationships:

You know Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots have always lived here and before 1974 we were living in harmony with each other.

(Greek Cypriot girl)

Because of 1974 Cyprus was divided but before that Cyprus was Cypriot and Greek and Turkish Cypriots lived together happily and peacefully.

(Greek Cypriot girl)

This highlighting of different time periods in the history of Cyprus was a common recurring theme in focus group discussions and was referred to repeatedly as a framework for more negative memories of the past. Turkish Cypriot young people drew attention to the events of 1963–1968 when Turkish Cypriots were forced to live in enclaves comprising about 3% of the island (see Patrick, 1976 for an overview of this time period). These more negative views are expressed in the following quotes:

All we are told is that there was an imbalance between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots from 1963 until 1967 and then they started fighting again and my mother lived in Famagusta at the time and she was a kid at the time and they had to live in the walls because if they got out they would be shot by Greek forces.

(Turkish Cypriot boy)

In Nicosia the Turkish Cypriots (during the 1960s) had to live within the walls and they had a lot of difficulties and stuff and actually at that time the Turkish Cypriots did want Turkey to come and save them because we didn't really see them as invaders, they were the savers because we thought we were going to be slaughtered by the Greeks if they didn't come.

(Turkish Cypriot boy)

In contrast, for Greek Cypriot young people, the landing of the Turkish army in 1974 and the subsequent division of the island was highlighted as the catalyst for the strained relationships between Greek and Turkish Cypriots:

The north part of Cyprus as we all know was occupied by the Turks in 1974....they found a reason to come here to Cyprus. They were supposed to come to protect the Turkish Cypriots but they were just waiting on a reason to come. They were wanting to find a way to come for many, many years.

(Greek Cypriot boy)

In 1974 when they came, well something happened here and they took advantage of it. I mean Makarios was the president and the Cypriots they wanted to get him out of the country and then they (the Turks) said 'oh my God the Greeks have a problem' let's go and invade and that was their excuse, it wasn't anything to do with the Turkish Cypriots, they just came and occupied Cyprus.

(Greek Cypriot boy)

In politically contested societies, children's minds often become 'the terrain for adult battles' (Stephens, 1995, p. vii). In relation to Cyprus, where the past is ever present, the child may assume core importance in ensuring that events are remembered or forgotten. As in many societies, the future of the child tends to be linked to the future of the country, and this may result in some children feeling that it is part of their duty as future citizens to remember or forget past events, and this means tapping into and accepting parents' and grandparents' 'imagined' stories of the past. Several Greek Cypriot young people indicated that they felt obligated to remember the Turkish invasion. They felt that they had a duty to remember the uprooting of Greek Cypriots. They had a responsibility to ensure that their parents' and grandparents' homes are returned to them and to ensure the return of their 'homeland'. This was often reflected in the discourses used to describe displacement where many young people used the present tense to describe their parents' and grandparents' past. 'My mother is a refugee' and 'my family are refugees' were commonly uttered phrases. In contrast, Turkish Cypriot young people suggested that they had a duty to remember the events of the 1960s. Their discourses highlighted tensions between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots which predated 1974, so for many, there was no going back to the 'good old days' because what happened before could happen again. This was reflected in discourses on family displacements where Turkish Cypriot young people used the past tense. In contrast to the Greek Cypriot young people, 'my mother was a refugee' and 'my family were refugees' were recurring used phrases. From attending various meetings between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot adults, Anastasiou (2002) observed how Turkish Cypriots, some of whom had been refugees three times over, spoke with emotional detachment about their links to their former homes creating an impression of indifference to the Greek Cypriot position whereby the loss of former homes and properties continues to be viewed in traumatic terms.

While young people from both groups produced stories, which not only described simultaneous harmonious and strained past relationships with one another, for the most part, they implied that while their families, on an individual basis, got on together with the 'other' perceived community, outside powers and wider politics interfered to keep them apart. To some extent, this absolved individual families and their offspring from responsibility for previous negative periods in Cypriot history. While this is not to imply that such memories are non-existent, in choosing to recount memories to me as a third party, stories which placed individual families in a good light were prioritised at the possible expense of more negative recollections. In discussing inter-generational memories, Welzer (2010) argues that such

partial recollections are not surprising, given that families' past plays a core role for the creation of young people's current identities. Moreover, the recounting of unfavourable stories, which imply some element of culpability in relation to previous generations' personal involvement in conflict, often 'leads the offspring to ignore the actual content of the original tale' (Welzer, 2010, p. 8). Hence, for the most part, young people produced stories, which placed them and their families as victims rather than perpetrators of previous events. This led to the recounting of competing histories. Thus, for example, Greek Cypriot young people referred to the actions of the Turkish army in 1974 as an 'invasion' or 'occupation', whereas Turkish Cypriot young people referred to the events as a 'war' or 'peace operation'. The usage of the term 'war' rather than 'invasion' implies an element of culpability attributed to both sides rather than a situation imposed by one group on to another and this was a common theme employed by Turkish Cypriot young people to describe the events of 1974, but the term was employed by both groups to describe core relationships between Turkey and Greece in earlier historic periods. In this vein, personal and group's histories were selected and framed to justify the past and contextualise the ongoing unease felt by some members of both groups concerning the present and the future.

Remembering and forgetting in school

Young people's understandings' of the past is also likely to be shaped by the educational system. Papadakis (2008), for example, outlines how traditionally the historical antagonistic relationship between Greece and Turkey was prioritised at the expense of a more localised history of Cyprus in the Cypriot education system on both sides of the island. While, over recent years, there have been attempts to rectify this state of affairs, Papadakis (2008) argues that for the most part, the teaching of Cypriot history remains partial and highly selective among both sides. For example, in the Greek Cypriot educational system, the inter-ethnic violence of 1960s is told from an explicitly Greek point of view, which presents the period as one of Turkish Cypriot (and Turkish) aggression and which overplays Greek Cypriot suffering and underplays Turkish Cypriot suffering, despite overwhelming evidence that the Turkish Cypriots suffered disproportionately during this period (Patrick, 1976). In contrast, the inter-ethnic violence of the 1960s is presented in graphic detail in Turkish Cypriot history books, while the events of 1974 fail to acknowledge Greek Cypriot suffering (which was disproportionate relative to Turkish Cypriot suffering in this period in terms of numbers of casualties and displacements), instead referring to the intervention of Turkey as 'the "Happy Peace Operation" when the "Heroic Turkish Army" came to safeguard the "Turks of Cyprus" and remained ever since (Papadakis, 2008, p. 136). Hence, the school's formal curriculum endorses the twin processes of remembering and forgetting outlined in the previous section.

And of course, teachers themselves are part of the history of Cyprus. Many are also refugees or come from families of refugees. Hence, they may have directly experienced the division of Cyprus or their own families may have been influenced by these events, and they may bring these experiences into the classroom so that official history lessons may be punctuated with unofficial personal stories. Both Turkish and Greek Cypriot young people indicated that teachers had at some point injected personal stories into the teaching of Cypriot history. This was often related to teachers' direct or indirect experiences of the two core events outlined earlier: For Greek Cypriots, the Turkish invasion of 1974 and for Turkish Cypriots, the inter-ethnic fighting that took place during the 1960s. Christou (2007) points out that one of the main purposes of Greek Cypriot education is to educate each new generation about the occupied part. All Greek Cypriot schools are decorated with the sign 'I don't forget and I

struggle' and this motto adorns exercise books and text books along with images of towns and villages in the north part of Cyprus as they were before the 1974 Turkish invasion. Hence, these images ensure that the events of 1974 are continually kept alive, despite less attention being given to specific historical details. They also at times enable family memories to be confirmed as one Greek Cypriot boy explained:

When a small child comes to school, he doesn't know anything. He thinks all the country is the same and the pictures and the words will make him think and he will go and ask his dad why does it say these words with the pictures and then his dad will explain to him what happened and why it is important not to forget.

For the most part, Greek Cypriot young people responded favourably to these images as the following quotes indicate:

I believe that this message is right. It helps us not to forget our history or our land.

(Greek Cypriot boy)

I think it is a very good thing because it helps us understand or know about our history and helps us not forget what happened so we don't forget what happened. It is important not to let anyone forget what happened.

(Greek Cypriot girl)

In outlining the importance of nostalgia for local intimacies of nationalism, Bryant (2008, p. 407) discusses the reminiscences of one teacher she interviewed who saw her role as one that indoctrinates children to a certain interpretation of history and who stated 'I taught for 30 years. More than 3000 students have passed through my hands. Do you think that any of them will ever forget our lost lands?' Bryant (2008, p. 17) also mentions a personal communication with a researcher working with Greek refugee children who had never experienced their parents' villages until after 2003, when crossings were permitted and who told her that they had been so influenced by their teacher's memories of Lapithos (Lapta) that they had a clearer vision of what that village looked like than they had of their parents' villages. Syprou's (2000) research also shows the powerful role of teachers in classrooms to define 'truth' and how some reworked children's contestations of the stories received by injecting personal opinions into formal narratives to develop a desire in Greek Cypriot children for liberating the occupied territories.

Turkish Cypriot young people's discussions on history education in school implied that their parents' memories of the events of the 1960s were endorsed within the educational system. The majority of young people indicated that teachers had at some point discussed this period with them formally and informally and on occasions injected personal stories into the discussions:

Our English teacher lived in an enclave in Nicosia. She said she never even ever saw the sea.

(Turkish Cypriot girl)

Our teacher told us they (Greek Cypriots) didn't treat us very well during the 60s and that's why we can never go back.

(Turkish Cypriot boy)

Hence, for the most part, young people produced discourses, which highlighted Turkish Cypriot suffering during this period which ended with Turkey's intervention in 1974. But there

was largely a culture of silence around the specificities of this period, particularly around the issue of Greek suffering and Greek casualties. These were silenced by the narratives of victimhood relating to the 1960s.

Accepting challenging and transforming memories

The data presented thus far suggest that the parents, grandparents and teachers of the young people recounted stories, which are more or less in line with the official narratives of history. Moreover, I have presented a view of young people passively internalising adult discourses around a history that none of them had any direct experience of. None of the young people were born during the events of the 1960s or Turkey's intervention in 1974, hence their knowledge of these periods were based on family stories or were gained through the school's formal and informal curriculum. In this section, I want to draw on other aspects of the data, which suggest that adult stories were not only likely to be inconsistent and contradictory, but that young people produced their own understandings of stories in ways that suggest that such stories are not just accepted, but resisted, challenged and transformed.

In relation to teachers, it is important to stress that I did not directly observe the teaching of history in classrooms nor were teachers interviewed about their practices, hence the analysis relies on what young people chose to recount in focus group interviews and while I have suggested that, according to the young people, many teachers infused history lessons with personal stories, there may have been other teachers who choose not to do so. Research from other areas of protracted conflict such as Northern Ireland suggests that teachers are often unwilling to take sides or confront controversial political issues (Bell and others, 2010). In relation to Cyprus, Christou's (2007) interviews with 55 Greek Cypriot young people indicates that the majority suggested that they were not taught the recent history of Cyprus in schools and the teachers who took part in her research also suggested that, for the most part, they avoided discussing politically controversial subjects. Leonard's (2007) research in Belfast produced similar findings where she illustrates how attempts to teach the recent history of the conflict in Northern Ireland through citizenship education has met with considerable resistance from teachers who express unwillingness to directly confront biased beliefs and personal stories.

While schools are sites where disparities of power between adults and children are highly visible and structured, nonetheless children are not empty vessels into which adults' pre-existing views and taken-for-granted assumptions are passively poured. Hence, even where teachers produce official narratives, as active agents, children have the capacity to accept, reject or modify the messages that they receive (Prout and James, 1997). During focus group discussions, there were many instances where these dominant discourses were not unquestioningly accepted:

If people want to live in the past then they have to know every aspect of the past. They have to know to look at things from other perspectives and not just the one perspective.

(Turkish Cypriot boy)

It is good to know every part of our history not just some parts of our history. We can move on in the Cyprus problem if we know every part of the history. When we know the past we can know our mistakes and we may not repeat them again.

(Greek Cypriot girl)

History is knowing the facts and discussing them. Discussing the facts but there are also some important points that you have to know. For example, one important point is the Turkish invasion and you have to make that point and to know that point but you might also have to discuss why the Turks did such a thing.

(Greek Cypriot boy)

Hence, some young people were questioning the history presented to them and the 'facts' on which such history was based. They were participating in formulating their own evaluations of the history being presented to them and at times this involved unpacking dominant discourses around remembering and forgetting. More could be done in Cyprus to work towards developing a shared history. However, Low-Beer (quoted in Bell and others, 2010) reminds us that in areas of protracted ethno-national conflict, there is unlikely to be a common history, rather there are two competing stories. In relation to the teaching of history in Northern Ireland, Low-Beer also argues that while the potential of teaching an alternative, more shared history is always possible within the educational system, the influence of the school is often less powerful than the influence of family members.

However, the adults that the children come into contact with on a daily basis within family networks are also likely to present much messier memories reflecting their varying personal experiences and previous or current ideological positioning. For example, Loizides (2007) argues that nationalist discourses often reflect right/left wing ideologies within the two main communities with the left more likely to challenge the selective amnesia of both sides. At times, during the focus group discussions, some young people suggested that more nuanced presentations of history were recounted by family members as the following quote indicates:

Of course I think both sides say different stories but my grandmother says it is so hard and both sides made bad things happen to each other and we each need to remember this.

(Turkish Cypriot girl)

In this quote, there is an acknowledgement that both sides may provide different versions of past events and that neither version may be wholly accurate. To some extent, this makes it difficult to ascertain if young people accept or resist family narratives, particularly as the article focuses on young people's perceptions of and disclosure of family memories rather than on parents' and grandparents' own understandings of history. But other aspects of the data provide an indication that while some young people appear to accept family memories, others rework dominant narratives. This can be illustrated by reference to how young people discussed the impact of the passing of time on the potency of family memories as the following extracts illustrate:

We may talk about that (going back to both communities living together) because we haven't been in the war but we can understand that they (parents) don't want to live together (Greek and Turkish Cypriots) because they spent their lives at war and they each have their bad stories. We just hear these stories; we don't live them so it's different for us. We are less affected.

(Turkish Cypriot girl)

In every generation there will be less and less. The past generation will hurt more than the next generation. For example, my father is 100% hurt. I am maybe 80% hurt but in every generation that percentage will go down.

(Greek Cypriot boy)

I disagree about that. We were born here and our parents were born here. It is our history and I don't agree that every generation will lose some of this percentage. It is still our history.

(Greek Cypriot boy)

This suggests that like adults, young people have messy and contradictory relationships with their past. Some may feel obligated to share and uphold family reminiscences of past wrongs, while others may feel it is up to them to move things on. The above extract also introduces the possibility that some young people may hold more extreme entrenched views than older generations. Nicolaides (2011), for example, cites research which suggests that young people may hold more extreme views than their parents regarding the future of Cyprus, with young people more likely to support division than a negotiated settlement. This again illustrates how the views of older generations may be reworked by young people in both positive and negative ways. Senehi (2002), for example, discusses two broad types of storytelling, constructive, which helps to lay the grounds for generating peace within and between divided communities, and destructive, which facilitates the intensification of distrust between divided groups. Both types of stories are likely to mutually co-exist, but they are not passed effortlessly from generation to generation. A fruitful future line of enquiry could focus in more detail on the dynamics involved between tellers and listeners of stories across generations; however, even within this small-scale qualitative study, there is evidence to suggest that the process whereby young people re-work the versions of history they are subjected to is far from linear, but rather fraught with contradictions, as young people attempt to deconstruct, co-construct and reconstruct the stories passed down to them.

Conclusion

Both Greek and Turkish Cypriot young people are exposed to stories, which reflect the dual processes of forgetting and remembering at play in Cyprus. For Turkish Cypriot young people, the core stories of their communities' past centre on the strained inter-ethnic relationships between both communities, which characterised the 1960s, but are less vocal in relation to the events of 1974. For Greek Cypriot young people, the events of 1974 are highlighted, but their communities remain relatively silent on the decade previous to this catastrophic period. This dual process of remembering and forgetting characterises the dominant discourses available to young people in the family and education system. The discourses produced by some young people reflect these meta-narratives. Through adult memories, the past and the present become inter-connected and projected into the future with the child located as the core conduit linking the past to the present and to the future. Cyprus remains a long way from developing a shared narrative of the past. However, memory is never static. Through the telling and retelling of stories, meanings are accepted, negotiated, challenged and in the process, often modified. At each telling and retelling of a story, the possibility always exists for negotiation or contestation. Hence, young people may become co-constructors of family memories in ways that involve questioning and unpicking dominant narrative frameworks. It is within this context that the potential for change is always present.

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